Message Text

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R 210404Z JAN 77 FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2615 INFO AMEMBASSY BONN AMEMBASSY CANBERRA AMEMBASSY SUVA

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SUVA FOR RICHARD IMUS AND CLARENCE GULICK

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, EAID, AS, TN, UR, MILI, GW

SUBJECT: WEST GERMAN SUGGESTION ON RENOVATING AMERICAN VESSEL

REF: 76 WELLINGTON 1667

1. DURING JANUARY 20 CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY OFFICER, WEST GERMAN AMBASSADOR SOLTMANN SUGGESTED POSSIBILITY THAT AMERICAN SHIP TO BE PROVIDED WESTERN SAMOA/SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM LINE MIGHT BE RENOVATED BY EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY AID FUND FOR SOUTH PACIFIC. EEC FUND OF \$10 MILLION OVER THREE YEARS WAS BEING ADMINISTERED FROM SUVA. SOLTMANN REASONED THAT AS VARIOUS ISLAND NATIONS (TONGA, WESTERN SAMOA, FIJI AND OTHERS) WOULD BENEFIT FROM SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM LINE, THEY MIGH BE PREPARED TO APPROACH JOINTLY THE EEC FUND FOR THE \$200,000 TO \$700,000 REQUIRED TO RENOVATE THE AMERICAN VESSEL.

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2. SOLTMANN THOUGH THAT DIRECT WEST GERMAN HELP TO RENOVATE THE SHIP WAS NOT A GOOD PROSPECT AT THIS TIME. REASTNS WERE THAT WEST GERMANY HAD PROVIDED SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF EEC FUND FOR SOUTH PACIFIC AND GERMAN CABINET HAD ALREADY DECIDED TO FINANCE BILATERALLY FIVE PROJECTS IN EACH OF TONGA AND WESTERN SAMOA TO BE SELECTED BY THOSE COUNTRIES. DELEGATION FROM BONN WOULD VISIT TONGA AND

WESTERN SAMOA IN MARCH TO FINALIZE ON THE GROUND APPROVAL OF AS MANY PROJECTS AS POSSIBLE. THOUGHT OCCURRED TO GERMAN AMBASSADOR THAT IF TONGA AND WESTERN SAMOA ELECTED TO DIVERT SOME OF BILATERAL GERMAN HELP TO RENOVATE AMERICAN SHIP THERE WOULD BE NO REASON FOR BONN TO OBJECT. BUT THAT METHOD MIGHT PRESENT DIFFICULTIES IN VIEW FACT THAT TWO COUNTRIES HAD ALREADY DECIDED ON ONE PROJECT THEY WANTED.

3. COMMENT: IN VIEW APPARENT INABILITY OF USG TO FINANCE SHIP RENOVATION AND UNENTHUSIASM OF NEW ZEALAND FOR FINANCING THE PROJECT (CONVEYED TO IMUS/GULICK TEAM IN RECENT WELLINGTON TALKS), DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF AN APPROACH TO THE EEC FUND. SELDEN

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